7. Lesions des Cellules de l'Ecorce Cerebrale dans Certaines Formes de Confusion Mentale (Lesions of the Cells of the Cerebral Cortex in Certain Forms of Mental Confusion). Gilbert Ballet (La Médecine Moderne, 9, 1898, p. 421.)

Under the name of mental confusion, a complex of symptoms is described which, until lately, has been confounded according to the most marked symptoms which each case might present, with febrile deliriums, sometimes with the deliriums of degeneration, sometimes with the different forms of melancholia, particularly with the stuporous variety. The predominating symptom is a confusion of ideas. Speech, when the patient talks, is loose, confused, sometimes almost incomprehensible. There is a manifest difficulty in the association of ideas, and an evident obstacle to intellectual function. The patient wants decision, memory is bad, power of attention impaired, the notions of space, place and time are enfeebled or wanting. There are usually hallucinations, and the patient lives in a kind of half-automatic activity; even if there are sane ideas, they are vague and changing, without system or constancy. This condition of things frequently follows infectious or toxic diseases.

All these symptoms point to its dependence upon lesions of the cortex, but up to the present no decided cortical lesions have been observed, or, at least, none more marked than thickening of the pia or atrophy of some myelin fibers.

Ballet has studied two cases presenting almost identical symptomatology. Both were women, both alcoholics, and both had slight tubercular lesions of the apices of the lungs; one presented some signs of polyneuritis of the legs, and both presented the complete mental picture of the disease under discussion. The post-mortem examinations of the brains were almost identical in their results. The cortex, stained by Nissl's method, was observed with a low power, and the large pyramidal cells, especially the cells of Betz, appeared to have lost their triangular form and to have become rounded. The processes were less marked, and even with a low power it was possible to observe the displacement of the nucleus, while with a high power it was only here and there a sound cell could be found. Chromatolysis was going on in all of them, the nucleus seemed to be pressing out of the cell, and in some of them the chromatolysis was complete and the nucleus entirely lost to view. It is possible that these changes were secondary and consecutive to the destruction by the poison of the cylinder axes. The analogy which they present to the lesions consequent upon experimental section or other pathological changes of the peripheral nerves, and the absence of vascular alteration, make this hypothesis probable. Meanwhile, it is interesting to find decided cellular cortical lesions in a disease hitherto classed as a psychosis.

Mitchell.

8. Beitrag zur pathologischen Anatomie des Centralnervensystems bei der acuten Anämie (Contribution to the Pathological Anatomy of the Central Nervous System in Acute Anemia). G. Scagliosi (Deutsche med. Wochenschrift, 20, 1898, p. 309).

Until the present time, no satisfactory report has been made concerning the condition of the ganglion cells in acute anemia, such as is produced by severe hemorrhage. Scagliosi reports the results of an examination of the brain and cord from a pregnant woman, who had uterine hemorrhage lasting thirty-four days. The gray matter was pale and the vessels were not as full as under normal conditions. The cells of the brain and cord presented chromatolysis. He believes that his case shows that a diminution in the number of red blood corpuscles is sufficient to cause intense alteration of the ganglion cells.

Spiller.

9. Sulle alterazione istologiche del sistema nervosa centrale del feto in seguito ad avvelénamento acuto e cronico della madre per alcool (Histological Alterations in the Nervous System of the Fetus, Following Acute and Chronic Alcohol Poisoning in the Mother). M. Carrara (Rivista di Medicine legale e di Giurisprudenza med., vol. 6, 1898, No. 2).

In pregnant guinea pigs poisoned by alcohol, the author shows that in the central nervous system of the young pigs after fixation by corrosive sublimate and staining by the methods of Nissl, Bizzozero, and Heidenhain that there are certain cell changes which, as far as the investigation has proceeded, have been constant.

In the brain the changes noted were but slight; they consisted for the most part of a lack of colorability of the chromatic substances. The nuclear membrane was also less distinct. Many karyokinetic figures were shown by the Bizzozero methods of staining. In the anterior horn cells of the spinal cord the changes were more pronounced. In them there was a marked peripheral chromatolysis similar to that found by Marinesco and others in direct poisoning of the animal itself.

Jelliffe.

10. Ueber morphologische Differenzen zwischen ruhenden und erregten Ganglienzellen (Concerning Morphological Differences Between Resting and Irritated Ganglion Cells). Friedel Pick (Deutsche med. Wochenenschrift, 22, 1898, p. 341).

Direct electrical irritation of the peripheral neurons must produce results differing from those occurring after normal action. Pick, to imitate normal conditions as closely as possible, exposed the brain in monkeys and cats when they were in narcosis and irritated it with the faradic current for a half hour to one hour, so that contractions occurred only on one side of the body. During the irritation the spinal canal was opened, and the segment necessary for the production of the movements was determined approximately by successive division of the roots or spinal cord. Sections from this and other portions were stained by the methods of Nissl and Golgi. The irritation in this way was applied at a remote point from the spinal cells. As only the cells of one side of the cord were irritated, a contrast was offered in the same preparation between the active and the resting cells. The former presented chromatolysis, chiefly peripheral, and this Pick believed favored the view that the chromatic substance is reserve material and disappears during activity. The cells were of irregular contour, and contained shrunken nuclei. In preparations from monkeys the cells near the union of the anterior and posterior horns were most altered, and this fact Pick believes proves v. Monakow's theory, according to which the central and peripheral motor neurons are connected by short interposed neurons.

Spiller.

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11. Les accidents nerveux du diabete (The Nervous Accidents of Diabetes). J. Vergely (Archives Cliniques de Bordeaux, Vol. 7, 1898, Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6).

In this article of 154 pages, the author reviews very thoroughly